



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE AFRICAN ORIGIN OF THE GRECIAN CIVILIZATION ¹

I imagine, ladies and gentlemen, that when you first read the subject of the address to be delivered before this society to-day, you were a bit surprised, and, I trust, a bit interested. To claim an African origin for the Grecian civilization is hardly in keeping with the historical traditions inherited from our school days. It savors of a sort of heresy and passes far beyond the limits of popular opinion. There is a peculiar unanimity among all historians to state without reservation that the greatest civilization the world has ever known was pre-eminently Aryan, but historians are not always to be relied upon. They write for their own race and times and are careful to give as little credit as possible to races and events which fall within the pale of their prejudices. I question, however, if there is to be gained any ultimate good by subverting truth and popularizing error. Indeed, I believe that if to-day our historians, authors, press and pulpit would give the public the truth as far as it is possible to attain it, to-morrow would find us filled with a new vigor and a fresh determination to conquer the wrongs and inconsistencies of human life.

The old idea of the Grecian civilization was that it sprung, like Minerva, full armed from the brow of Zeus. It seemed to have no tangible beginning. The fabled kings and heroes of the Homeric Age, with their palaces and strongholds, were said to have been humanized sun-myths; their deeds but songs woven by wandering minstrels to win their meed of bread. Yet there has always been a suspicion among scholars that this view was wrong. The more we study the moral aspects of humanity the more we become convinced that the flower and fruit of civilization are evolved according to laws as immutable as those laws governing the manifestations of physical life. Historians have written that Greece was invaded by Aryans about 1400 B. C., and that henceforth arose the wonderful civilization; but the student knows that such was an impossibility and that some vital factor has been left out of the equation. When the Aryans invaded Greece they were savages

¹ This address was delivered before the Omaha Philosophical Society, April 1, 1917.

from Neolithic Europe and could not possibly have possessed the high artistic capacities and rich culture necessary for the unfolding of Ægean civilization. "Of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes."

Speaking of the two foremost Grecian states, Herodotus writes as follows: "These are the Lacedæmonians and Athenians, the former of Doric, the latter of Ionic blood. And, indeed, these two nations had held from very early times the most distinguished place in Greece, the one being Pelasgic, the other a Hellenic people, and the one having never quitted its original seas, while the other had been excessively migratory." "The Hellenes," wrote Professor Boughton in the *Arena* some years ago, "were the Aryans first to be brought into contact with these sunburnt Hamites, who, let it be remembered, though classed as whites, were probably as strongly Nigritic as are the Afro-Americans." "Greek art is not *αυτοχθονος*," said Thiersch some fifty years ago, "but we derived from the Pelasgians, who, being blood relations of the Egyptians, undoubtedly brought the knowledge from Egypt." "The aptitude for art among all nations of antiquity," remarked Count de Gobineau a few years later, "was derived from an amalgamation with black races. The Egyptians, Assyrians and Etruscans were nothing but half-breeds, mulattoes." In the year 1884 Alexander Winchell, the famous American geologist, upset Americans with an article appearing in the *North American Review*. From it I quote the following: "The Pelasgic empire was at its meridian as early as 2500 B. C. This people came from the islands of the Ægean, and more remotely from Asia Minor. They were originally a branch of the sunburnt Hamitic stock that laid the basis of civilization in Canaan and Mesopotamia, destined later to be Semitized. Danaus and his daughters—that is, the fugitive 'shepherds' from Egypt—sought refuge among their Hamitic kindred in the Peloponnesus about 1700 B. C. Three hundred years before this these Pelasgians had learned the art of weaving from Aryan immigrants. In time they occupied the whole of Greece and Thessaly. Before 200 B. C. they established themselves in Italy. Thus do we get a conception of a vast Hamitic empire existing in prehistoric times, whose several nationalities were centered in Mesopotamia, Canaan, Egypt, Northwestern Africa, Iberia, Greece, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and Central Europe—an intellectual ethnic family, the first of the Adamites to emerge into historic light, but with the records of its achievements buried in gloom

almost as dense as that which covers the ruder populations that the Hamites everywhere displaced. To this family, chiefly, are to be traced the dark complexions of the nations and tribes still dwelling around the shores of the Mediterranean."

It was to be expected that such statements as the foregoing would throw the scholastic world into a ferment. There was a scramble to bolster up the cause of Aryanism and to preserve this one civilization, at least, to the credit of the Caucasian race. Homer was scanned with a patience unknown to college students and the classic myths were refined in the alembics of master minds. Yet there were some who cared for truth more than for racial glory and among them was Dr. Schlieman. Armed with a spade he went to the classic lands and brought to light a real Troy; at Tiryns and Mycenæ he laid to view the palaces and tombs and treasures of Homeric kings. His message back to scholars who waited tensely for his verdict was, "It looks to me like the civilization of an African people." A new world opened to archeologists and the Ægean became the Mecca of the world. Traces of this prehistoric civilization began to make their appearance far beyond the limits of Greece itself. From Cyprus and Palestine to Sicily and Southern Italy, and even to the coasts of Spain, the colonial and industrial enterprise of the Myceneans has left its mark throughout the Mediterranean basin. The heretics were vindicated. "Whether they like it or not," declared Sir Arthur Evans before the London Hellenic Society a short time ago, "classical students must consider origins. The Grecians whom we discern in the new dawn were not the pale-skinned northerners, but essentially the dark-haired, brown-complexioned race." Perhaps Sir Arthur's words will carry weight with you when I remark that his wonderful discoveries in classical lands have brought him the honor of election last year as president of the British Association, the most notable assemblage of scholars in the world. I might further mention that Professor Sergi, of the University of Rome, has founded a new study of the origin of European civilization upon the remarkable archeological finds, entitled "The Mediterranean Race." From this masterly work I choose the following: "Until recent years the Greeks and Romans were regarded as Aryans, and then as Aryanized peoples; the great discoveries in the Mediterranean have overturned all these views. To-day, although a few belated supporters of Aryanism still remain, it is becoming clear that the most ancient civilization of the Mediter-

anean is not of Aryan origin. The Aryans were savages when they invaded Europe; they destroyed in part the superior civilization of the Neolithic populations, and could not have created the Græco-Latin civilization. The primitive populations of Europe originated in Africa and the basin of the Mediterranean was the chief center of movement when the African migrations reached the center and north of Europe."

What, then, are some of those discoveries which have so completely destroyed the ethnic fetish of the Caucasian race? The greatest and most conclusive of them all was the discovery of the palace of Minos by Sir Arthur Evans. In 1894 this scientist undertook a series of exploration campaigns in central and eastern Crete; it has so happened that some years previous he had been hunting out ancient engraved stones at Athens and came upon some three or four-sided seals showing on each of their faces groups of hieroglyphics and linear signs distinct from the Egyptian and Hittite, but evidently representing some form of script. Upon inquiry Sir Arthur learned that these seals had been found in Crete, and to Crete he went. The legends of the famous labyrinth and palace of Minos came back to him and were refreshed by the gossiping peasants, who repeated the tales that had come down as ancestral memories. In wandering around the site of his proposed labors Sir Arthur noticed some ruined walls, the great gypsum blocks of which were engraved with curious symbolic characters, crowning the southern slope of a hill known as Kephala, overlooking the ancient site of Knossos, the city of Minos. It was the prelude to the discovery of the ruins of a palace, the most wonderful archeological find of modern times.

Who was Minos? In the myths that have come down to us he was a sort of an Abraham, a friend of God, and often appears as almost identical with his native Zeus. He was the founder and ruler of the royal city of Knossos, the Cretan Moses, who every nine years repaired to the famous cave of Zeus whether on the Cretan Ida or on Dicta, and received from the god of the mountain the laws for his people. He was powerful and great and extended his dominions far and wide over the Ægean Isles and coast lands, and even Athens paid to him its tribute of men and maidens. To him is attributed the founding of the great Minoan civilization.

I will not have time to-day to review the mass of archeological data which the discoveries of this civilization have pro-

duced. They consist of cyclopean ruins of cities and strongholds, tombs, vases, statues, votive bronzes, and exquisitely engraved gems and intaglios. That which is most valuable in establishing the claim of the African origin of the Grecian civilization is the discovery of the frescoes on the palace walls. These opened up a new epoch in painting and are of the utmost interest to the world. The colors are almost as brilliant as when laid down more than three thousand years ago. Among these frescoes are numerous representations of the race whose civilization they represent. It was a race neither Aryan nor Semitic, but African. The portraiture follows the Egyptian precedent and for the first time the mysterious Minoan and Mycenaean people rise before us. The tint of the flesh is of a deep reddish brown and the limbs finely moulded. The profile of the face is pure and almost classically Greek. The hair is black and curling and the lips somewhat full, giving the entire physiognomy a distinct African cast. In the women's quarters the frescoes show them to be much fairer, the difference in complexion being due, probably, to the seclusion of harem life. But in their countenances, too, remain those distinguishable features which link with the African race.

You will pardon me, I trust, if occasion is taken here to impress upon you the value of genuine archeological evidence. Historians may write anything to reflect their vanity or their prejudices, but when the remains of ancient civilizations rise out of the dust and sands and give the lie to their assertions there is nothing more to be said. Egypt, Mesopotamia, Phoenecia, Greece, and Rome, have all been claimed for the Aryan, but the spade has unearthed stone that bears sentient witness to the fact that Africa has been the pioneer in the field of civilization. We wonder, then, why the historians continue to ignore these remains and persist in continuing falsehood. There can be but one answer and that is racial vanity prefers falsehood to truth and prejudice demands suppression rather than expression.

Yet these frescoes of Crete need not be such a surprise to scholars and public after all. The very classics themselves have more than hinted of the great part played by Africa in the development of Grecian civilization. Let us revert to the myths and trace the descent of Minos and his progeny. You will recollect that the ancient heroes of Greece were divided into the older and younger branches, the former belonging to the house of Inachus, distinctly

Hamitic, while the latter belonged to the race of Japetus, distinctly a mixture.

The Pelasgic races of the south traced their descent from Inachus, the river god and son of Oceanus. The son of Inachus, Phoroneus, lived in the Peloponnesus and founded the town of Argos. He was succeeded by his son, Pelasgus, from whom the aforementioned races of the south derived their name. Io, the divine sister of Phoroneus, had the good fortune, or perhaps misfortune, to attract the attention of the all-loving Zeus and as a consequence incurred the enmity of Hera. She is transformed into a beautiful heifer by Zeus, but a gadfly sent by Hera torments her until she is driven mad and starts upon those famous wanderings which became the subject of many of the most celebrated stories of antiquity. Æschylus reviews her roamings in his great tragedy, "Prometheus Bound," and makes Io to arrive at Mount Caucasus to which the fire-bringer is chained. It is here that Prometheus delivers to her the oracle given him by his mother, Themis, Titan-born. He directs her to Canobos, a city on the Nile, and tells her that there Zeus will restore her mind.

"and thou shalt bear a child
Of Zeus begotten, Epaphos, 'Touchborn,'
Swarthy of hue."

Aryan parents do not usually bear black children and to show that Æschylus was thoroughly cognizant of the ethnical relationship here implied, permit me to quote from "The Suppliants," another of his tragedies. The Suppliants were the fifty daughters of Danaus, the Shepherds of Egypt, and they described themselves as, "We, of swart sunburnt race," "our race that sprang from Epaphos," and when they appear before the Argive king, claiming his country as their ancestral home, their color causes him to question their claims in the following words:

"Nay, stranger, what ye tell is past belief
For me to hear, that ye from Argos spring;
For ye to Libyan women are most like,
And nowise to our native maidens here.
Such race might Neilos breed, and Kyprian mould,
Like yours, is stamped by skilled artificers
On women's features; and I hear that those
Of India travel upon camels borne,
Swift as the horse, yet trained as sumpter-mules,
E'en those who as the Æthiops' neighbors dwell.
And had ye borne the bow, I should have guessed,
Undoubting, ye were of the Amazon tribe."

No, Æschylus made no mistake. He meant just what he wrote and the discoveries of the wonderful Minoan civilization have proven that the swarthy touch-born son of Zeus and Io was the incarnation of the African element that raised Greece to the very pinnacle of civilization. Minos is in direct descent from Epaphos and from the latter's prolific progeny we note such names as Agenor, Cadmus, Europa, Ægyptus, Danaus, Perseus, Menelaus, husband of the famous Helen, Hercules, and Agamemnon, chosen by the Greeks to lead them against Troy.

If I should conclude at this point my thesis would be complete and conclusive, but there are other subjects which demand some attention. I cannot pass in silence the supposed testimony to the presence of the fair type in Greece, and to its superiority over the darker population, furnished by the Homeric poems. This supposed testimony has precipitated wordy wars as terrible, though perhaps less sanguinary, as those which were engaged in by the gods and heroes themselves. The fault, however, lies with the translators rather than with the epics. From the work of these industrious authors we get the idea that golden hair and blue eyes were so common that there was little chance of any other sort of people lingering around. The truth of the matter is that these translators, like historians, have permitted their prejudices to warp their accuracy. There is not in the entire writings of Homer an adjective or description applying to any of the principals that even suggests a single one of them having blue eyes and golden hair. Indeed, it is quite the reverse. Athena is *γλαυκῶπις*; *γλαῦκος* means blue like the sea and the unclouded sky; the olive is *γλαῦκος* also, and Athena is guardian of the olive. *Γλαυκῶπις* means that her eyes are brilliant and terrible. Apollo in Homer is *χρῦσάορος*, that is to say, bearing a golden sword; while *ξανθός*, which has been mistranslated to mean fair, means reddish brown and brown, Artemis is *χρῦση*, golden, that is to say, brilliant, but never fair. Neptune is *κυανοχαίτης*, that is to say, bluish, blackish, like the dark and deep waves of the ocean. Eos, the dawn, is *χρῦσῶθρονος*, *ροδοδάκτυλος*, *κροκόπεπλος*, because the color of the dawn is golden, rosy and red. Neither Hera nor Kalypsos is fair from the descriptive adjectives. Achilles is *ξανθος* which, as was said before, means reddish brown and brown. Agamemnon is also *ξανθος* and remember, if you please, that he is in direct descent from Epaphos, the swarthy ancestor of the Pelasgic houses.

So you see that even our translators are not to be trusted.

Professor Sergi made an extensive investigation of the supposed testimony to the presence of the fair type in Greece and his conclusions are as follows: "In Homer none of the individuals are fair in the ethnographic sense of the word. I could bring forth a wealth of facts to show that what I have just stated regarding the anthropological characters of the Homeric gods and heroes may also be said, and with more reason, of the types of Greek and Roman statuary which, though in the case of the divinities they may be conventionalized, do not in the slightest degree recall the features of a northern race." Hence the blue-eyed and golden-haired gods and goddesses who grace the canvases of our art galleries and theater curtains are but pigmentary creations from the minds of artists who visualize the peculiarities of their own race just as the Jewish Madonna is depicted as a Spanish, Dutch, German, English, Italian, Russian, Scandinavian, and even as an African mother by the different nationalities in turn.

Another idea which seems to be rapidly taking hold upon the scholastic mind is that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are in reality Minoan epics made over, if you please, to fit the later Grecian epochs. While the Homer we know professedly commemorates the deeds of Achæan heroes, everything about them is non-Hellenic. The whole picture of the civilization, including home life, dress, religious worship, and architecture, is Minoan and Mycenean. Warriors' weapons are of bronze when the age to which we attribute Homer was an iron age. The combatants use huge body shields when, as a matter of fact, such shields had been obsolete long previous to 1200 B. C. The form of worship, hymns and invocations to deities, and the use of certain sacrificial forms were all adaptations from the Mycenean ritual. The arrangements of the palaces and courts as narrated in the epics were counterparts of the Minoan and Mycenean palaces and had long since passed out of existence. Among the discoveries in Crete have been found pictorial scenes exactly as described in Homer, and the artistic representations upon the shield of Achilles and upon the shield of Hercules, as described by Hesiod, have been duplicated among the ruins of Crete. Upon intaglios recovered we find combatants striking at each other's throats and you will recollect that Achilles does just this thing in his fight with Hector. I might continue these coincidences indefinitely, but I believe that the point I desire to make is sufficiently clear to merit your attention. The great Grecian epics are

epics of an African people and Helen, the cause of the Trojan war, must henceforth be conceived as a beautiful brown skin girl.

In the press and periodicals of our country we read that the classics are doomed and about to pass out of our lives, but the classics can never die. I sometimes dream of a magical time when the sun and moon will be larger than now and the sky more blue and nearer to the world. The days will be longer than these days and when labor is over and there falls the great flood of light before moonrise, minds now dulled with harsh labor and commercialism will listen to those who love them as they tell stories of ages past, stories that will make them tingle with pleasure and joy. Nor will these story tellers forget the classics. They will hear the surge of the ocean in Homer and march with his heroes to the plains of Troy; they will wander with Ulysses and help him slay the suitors who betrayed the hospitality of the faithful Penelope; they will escape from Priam's burning city with Æneas, weep over Dido's love, and help him to found a nation beside the Tiber. And the translators who shall again bring into life the dead tongues will not let prejudice cloud their brains or truth make bitter their tongues. The heroes of Homer shall, like the Prince of Morocco, wear the livery of the burnished sun and be knit by binding ties to the blood of Afric's clime from whence civilization took its primal rise.

Permit me now, ladies and gentlemen, to show definitely the debt which Greece owes to the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations. Crete, as I have said before, appears to be the center from which the Mediterranean culture radiated. It is the "Mid-Sea Land," a kind of half-way house between three continents, and its geographical position makes it the logical cradle of European civilization. It is near the mainland of Greece, opposite the mouths of the Nile and in easy communication with Asia Minor, with which it was actually connected in late geological times. As I mentioned before, the civilization expanded in every direction and at the time of the conquest it had firm hold upon Greece, appearing at Mycenæ, Tiryns, Thebes, Orochomenos, and other places. That some vanguard of Aryan immigrants came into contact with this culture at its climax is plain from the evidence furnished by Homer. That they mingled with the inhabitants is certain. The later onrush about 1200 B. C. destroyed in part the civilization found there, but fortunately there was not utter destruction. These rude people

realized the difference between their savagery and their enemies' culture. They, too, merged with the inhabitants and formed the Grecian people of historic times. This amalgamation is clearly apparent in the Greeks to-day and because of it Count de Gobineau has called their ancestors half-breeds and mulattoes. Note, also, if you will, that Greek genius burned brightest in those parts of Greece where the Minoan elements were most thoroughly planted.

If you should inquire the source of the Minoan civilization I would first call your attention to the fact that Herodotus attributed much of the Grecian civilization to Egypt, and secondly to the opinion expressed by Sir Arthur Evans in his presidential address before the British Association last fall. "My own recent investigations," said he, "have more and more brought home to me the all pervading community between Minoan Crete and the land of Pharaohs. When we realize the great indebtedness of the succeeding classical culture of Greece to its Minoan predecessor the full significance of this conclusion will be understood. Ancient Egypt itself can no longer be regarded as something apart from general human history. Its influences are seen to lie about the very cradle of our civilization. The first quickening impulse came to Crete from the Egyptian and not from the Oriental side." Herodotus has been called the father of lies, but at this late date we again see him vindicated in a conclusion reached by the greatest living authority upon classical archeology.

Before closing I wish again to enforce the fact that the ferment creating the wonderful Grecian civilization was preeminently the ferment of African blood. Take all the archeological facts of the last fifty years and read them up or down, across or diagonally, inside and out, and this fact rises into your mind like a Banquo that will not down. Historians may distort truth and rob the African race of its historical position, but facts are everywhere throwing open the secret closets of nations and exposing ethnic skeletons that laugh and jest at our racial vanities. The Aryan savages of Europe came down upon Greece, found there a great civilization, merged with the inhabitants and builded a greater. The all but savage European of the Dark Ages knew nothing of culture save what had been taught him by the Roman legions, the heirs of the Mediterranean civilization. This little was almost forgotten until religious fanaticism started the Crusades and brought them into contact with the civilized refinement of the Arabians,

Moors and Saracens, likewise peoples in whose veins flowed the fiery ferment of African blood. If, as Sir Arthur Evans declares, classical students must consider origins and admit the ancient Grecians of African descent, so must they go a bit further and admit the Renaissance to have sprung because of contact between feudal Europe and African Mohammedanism. Again we must admit, no matter how bitter the taste, that the mixed race has always been the great race—the pure race always the stagnant race. One potent reason for the possible downfall of European civilization to-day is the fact that the Aryan element has proven incapable of the mighty trust. It has forgotten the everlasting lesson of history that mergence of distinct types means the perpetuation of nationalism. The sole tenet of Europe has been the domination of the world by the Caucasian and suddenly it discovers that the term Caucasian is too narrow to include both Saxon and Teuton. Hence a war for the extermination of both.

The end of the world is not near and the dream of a millennium is equidistant. The sum of all that is past is but a prelude of that which is to come. It has taken the brute a myriad of years for his gaze to reach beyond them. Civilization is a mixture of dictions and contradictions and none of us to-day is sure that we know just what it means. Through all there yet remain:

“Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,—
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing,—
Upholds us, cherish and have powers to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of Eternal Silence.”

I close with the hope of a time when earthly values will be measured with a justice now deemed divine. It is then that Africa and her sun-browned children will be saluted. In that day men will gladly listen with open minds when she tells how in the deep and dark pre-historic night she made a stairway of the stars so that she might climb and light her torch from the altar fires of heaven, and how she has held its blaze aloft in the hall of ages to brighten the wavering footsteps of earthly nations.